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ABSTRACT

This report is a program planning document for the South Dakota School for the Deaf and the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped. First, it reviews the history and current status of the schools and then presents information on the planning process, which included the two schools, the South Dakota Board of Regents, and the state legislature. The environment in which individuals with disabilities live and the role of residential and day schools for individuals with deafness and blindness are described. Assumptions of the plan are identified for such areas as: mission and planning, governance, students, program, staffing, finance, facilities, and intergovernmental relations. Future directions are identified, including: (1) access to appropriate services; (2) quality of programs and services; (3) maximization of service delivery statewide; (4) creation of a quality teaching and learning environment that promotes student growth; (5) development of the schools as centers of excellence; (6) resource management; (7) collaborative partnerships with parents, state education agency staff, school districts, state universities, consumer groups, and service providers; (8) increased public understanding of vision and hearing loss and appreciation for quality educational programs for children; (9) competitive compensation for employees; and (10) maintenance of facilities and equipment. Specific objectives are listed for each of these directions. Benchmarks to measure the progress toward each goal are provided in a checklist format. The mission statement of each school is given. (CR)

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ACCESS TO QUALITY

■A Planning Document for South Dakota's Special Schools■

EC 304985

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April 1996

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ACCESS TO QUALITY

A Planning Document
for the
South Dakota School for the Deaf
and the
South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 3

Background 4

Looking Ahead 7

The Process 8

The Environment 9

Assumptions 11
- Mission and Planning Assumptions 11
- Statewide Assumptions 11
- Governance Assumptions 13
- Student Assumptions 13
- Program Assumptions 14
- Staffing Assumptions 15
- Finance Assumptions 16
- Facilities Assumptions 17
- Intergovernmental Relations Assumptions 17

Directions 19

Benchmarks 27

School for the Visually Handicapped Mission Statement 30

School for the Deaf Mission Statement 32

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

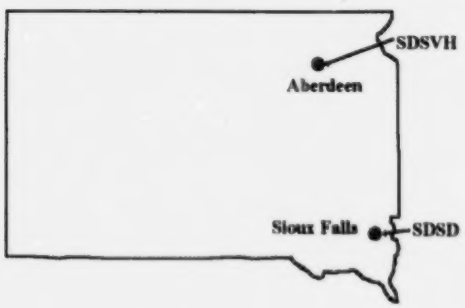
The planning process for the South Dakota School for the Deaf and the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped was based on the same principles which guided the development of *Access to Quality* for higher education. It was a participative process that included the superintendents and Board of Regents Executive Director with review and input from faculty, staff and the schools' Advisory Councils. The process began in September 1994 with a draft report to the South Dakota Board of Regents in June 1995.

The document includes a chapter on the environment in which the special schools operate, as well as assumptions in a variety of areas. Assumptions were grouped into nine broad categories: Mission and Planning, Statewide, Governance, Student, Program, Staffing, Finance, Facilities and Intergovernmental Relations. In each category, statements reflect what exists or is expected to exist in the immediate future.

The next section lists eleven directions which are to be pursued. The directions include: access to appropriate services, quality of programs and services, maximizing delivery statewide, creating quality teaching and learning environments, development of centers of excellence, resource management, collaborative relationships, partnerships with parents, increased public understanding of vision and hearing loss, competitive compensation for employees and maintenance of facilities and equipment. The directions are ambitious and reflect a standard of excellence. Some of the directions will require additional resources to implement and maintain. The course, however, is clear. The rate of progress may be affected by resource availability.

The last section identifies benchmarks by which progress in the chosen directions will be measured. The directions identified are intended to provide appropriate educational programs and services for students with sensory losses, given the nature of South Dakota and its resources. By observing progress on the benchmarks, we will have a means of determining our success in fulfilling the role and mission of the two special schools.

South Dakota's Special Schools



BACKGROUND

The South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped and the South Dakota School for the Deaf have been a part of the educational system in South Dakota since the late 1800s. The schools were initially governed by the Board of Charities and Corrections. In 1944, the state constitution was changed to place the two schools under the governance of the South Dakota Board of Regents.

The South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped and the South Dakota School for the Deaf are separately operated schools under the authority of the South Dakota Board of Regents. Each develops its own budget and presents it to the Board and the Legislature on an annual basis. Each school works independently with organizations in their respective fields on issues of accreditation and teacher certification. Each school has its own Advisory Council which includes representation from parents, consumer groups, school staff and other interested parties. Both are subject to regular compliance monitoring by the Office of Special Education and standard accreditation requirements of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as well as Board of Regents policies.

The two schools have been studied by interim committees at approximately five year intervals since 1970. Under the Gibb Plan of 1970, the recommendation was made to administratively attach the SDSD to the University of South Dakota and the SDSVH to Northern State College. The plan for SDSD was dropped after it was determined to be unworkable. The SDSVH was placed under the control of NSC from 1974-1977. The arrangement did not result in either program improvement or savings and was rescinded by the Board of Regents.

❑History of the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped

In 1879, the Territory of Dakota recognized a need to provide instruction and maintenance to the "deaf, dumb and blind" by entering into contracts with Iowa, Minnesota or Nebraska. The school of choice for the blind was the Iowa College for the Blind in Vinton, Iowa. In 1893, the Legislature appropriated the first sum for the education of the blind in the sum of $1,000. In 1895 legislation was passed which provided for the education of "all such as may be too blind to acquire an education in the common schools of suitable capacity, between the ages of 10 and 30 years."

In 1895, the Legislature accepted a gift of property from the citizens of Gary, South Dakota, which had been used as the Duel County Courthouse. Because the original building was unsuitable for a school, the citizens of Gary subscribed the money to build a two-story brick structure (1899-1900) which was connected to the old building. As local merchant "Grandma Wells" commented, "I thought it over and prayed over it, and it seemed to me that the blind children of South Dakota needed school more than I needed spending money."

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In 1901, the Legislature appropriated money for a permanent institution "for the use of the State Blind Asylum at Gary." The asylum was governed by the Board of Charities and Corrections.

The 1917 Legislature made provision for the "care, maintenance, and instruction of blind babies and children under school age." In 1925 the age limit was reduced to those "under 21 years" and up to 12 years of schooling was to be provided at the state's expense. In 1909, the name was changed from "asylum" to the South Dakota School for the Blind. In 1944, it was removed from the list of charitable institutions and placed under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota Board of segents.

From the beginning, the course of instruction offered at the school followed closely what was taught in the common schools of the state. In addition to the regular curriculum, braille was taught as was gymnasium, industrial work and domestic science. Piano tuning, broom making, chair caning and upholstery were taught in preparation for employment. Realizing that a residential school had a special responsibility to aid children away from home, the Legislative Act of 1931 specifically mentioned insuring genuine "kindness and sympathy" toward all pupils.

In 1957-58, the idea of relocating the school surfaced. The major contentions were the inadequacy of the facilities at Gary, the lack of travel experiences for students, and proximity to a college. The Legislature passed a bill moving the school to Aberdeen in 1959. Eight hundred thousand dollars ($800,000) was appropriated to build on land donated by the city of Aberdeen. Classes began in the new facility on September 18, 1960. In 1968, an activities building was added at a cost of $165,000.

In 1970, the name of the school was changed to South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped to reflect the fact that students who were visually impaired, as well as those who were blind, were eligible for services.

A federally funded program to serve deaf-blind students was begun in 1972 as a part of a nationwide response to the rubella epidemic of the mid1960s. In 1979, serving deaf-blind students was added to the responsibility of the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped.

In 1981, in a response to growing requests from parents and local school districts, a teacher was assigned to travel and work with visually impaired students in their local schools. In 1985, another teaching position was reassigned to provide outreach to the western part of the state. The 1988 Legislature funded a third outreach position to serve the southeast part of the state, and in 1993, transition services to local schools were added.

❑History of the South Dakota School for the Deaf

The South Dakota School for the Deaf (SDSD), formerly Dakota School for Deaf Mutes, was founded in November of 1880 in Sioux Falls by Reverend Thomas Berry. At that time, Reverend Berry was able to rent a private dwelling known as the Thomas Lodging House, located on Main Avenue. The South Dakota School for the Deaf has been supported reasonably well by South Dakotans and governing board since its founding. The school depended for its financial support upon donations of the founders, Rev. Thomas Berry and public-spirited citizens, such as E. A. Sherman of Sioux Falls. In 1883, the Territorial Legislature provided for a Board of Trustees of five members to be appointed by the Governor for a period of two years. Administration of the school remained under this board until South Dakota became a state in 1889, when the School for the Deaf was placed under the supervision of the State Board of Charities and Corrections. By constitutional amendment, the supervision of the school was transferred from the Board of Charities and Corrections to the Board of Regents in 1944. Today the Board of Regents is the governing body of the two special schools, SDSD and SDSVH and the six state universities.

Over the course of 115 years, the school has grown from a rented building to a large, modern facility which houses the academic program and the residential dormitory for the deaf and hard of hearing students who attend the school. In 1992, the Legislature passed a bill authorizing the Board of Regents to construct a new residential hall on the SDSD campus and to appropriate money therefor. The same Legislature also passed a bill to permit the sale of certain state-owned land (western part of the SDSD campus, approximately 8 acres) under the control of the South Dakota Board of Regents to provide for deposit of the proceeds.

Through the years, the mission of the South Dakota School for the Deaf has changed and expanded greatly. Emphasis in special education was refocused in the early 1970's due to federal mandates (Education of All Handicapped Children Act - PL 94-142, and the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA, the revision of PL 94-142). The objectives of the laws insure that a "continuum of placement alternatives" be available for all children with disabilities. The continuum includes public schools (regular classrooms, resource rooms, and special classes), special schools, home instruction and hospital instruction. The mission of the school today is to provide a quality, comprehensive, and specialized program of education and special related services to deaf and hard of hearing children from birth through age 21. This includes serving as a resource to parents and families as well as to local school districts and various agencies in South Dakota in order to foster the maximum possible educational benefits for deaf and hard of hearing children of the state.

To meet the growing demand/requests from parents, local school districts and various agencies, the outreach component was established in the late 1970s to provide direct and non-direct services across the state. This became an important link in the education of South Dakota's deaf and hard of hearing children.

LOOKING AHEAD

The South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped and the South Dakota School for the Deaf have long histories of service to students. As student needs, educational philosophies and resources have changed, the schools have responded. The need for educational intervention by trained and experienced teachers of the deaf and blind remains, but delivery modes have been expanded to allow for the individual needs of students and their families. Change, however, is a continuous process and the two schools need to work with the Board of Regents and the Legislature as well as parents, local schools and consumer organizations to refine and improve the educational options for students with vision or hearing loss.

It is in this spirit that this plan was developed. The value of common directions identified as an interactive process will be demonstrated in a common purpose and expansion of educational opportunities for children with vision or hearing loss.

The pursuit of excellence in education is in keeping with the spirit of total quality management. Focusing on the directions outlined in this plan, we strive for continuous improvement.

THE PROCESS

Planning and reviewing of the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped and the South Dakota School for the Deaf has been an ongoing process involving the South Dakota Board of Regents and the Legislature, as well as the administration and staff of both schools. The schools were a part of the overall study of regental institutions conducted in 1970. Both schools have been the subject of summer studies by the Legislature in 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990. In 1986, the two special schools were included in a Governor's study of special education.

In 1980, a Joint Powers Agreement was established between the Board of Regents and the Board of Education. It was designed to delineate the responsibilities of each in regard to the SDSD and SDSVH, and establish a formal system for communication. In 1991, the Joint Powers Agreement was revised as an Interagency Agreement which established a cooperative working relationship and outlined specific tasks to be accomplished by the two special school superintendents and the director of special education or their designatee. This Interagency Agreement is reviewed and revised regularly by the two boards when they meet in joint session. Key to the coordinated effort is the review of the agreement on a regular basis by the Advisory Councils from the two schools, as well as the South Dakota Advisory Panel for Children with Disabilities.

In 1990-91, SDSD Superintendent Dr. Frank Turk, SDSVH Superintendent Marje Kaiser, Board of Regents Executive Director Dr. Howell Todd and Director of the Office of Special Education Dr. Dean Myers, conducted a series of meetings with the purpose of coordinating services to students with vision and hearing loss. The study team met with the appropriations committee and shared a draft of revised Role and Mission statements for the two schools. The new Role and Mission statements for the two schools were approved by the Board of Regents on March 22, 1991.

In 1990, the process of strategic planning for the South Dakota university system was initiated by the Board of Regents. The resulting *Access to Quality* document did not include the two special schools. In 1994, the superintendents began work with the Board of Regents Executive Director to complete a similar process for the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped and the South Dakota School for the Deaf. As draft copies of the document were prepared, they were reviewed by the faculty and Advisory Committees at each school. The draft was approved by the South Dakota Board of Regents at its June 1995 meeting.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Historically, individuals who had disabilities were shunned. In some cultures they were abandoned or killed outright. In others they became beggars or objects of charity. It is only in recent history that individuals with disabilities were seen as potentially educable and expectations for their employment and contribution to society increased. The involvement of the deaf and blind in their own education and welfare is even more recent. The work of the American Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind and the National Association of the Deaf have focused not on entitlement programs, but on independence and empowerment. The "Deaf Pride" movement at Gallaudet University and the "Joint Organizational Effort" by blindness organizations, as well as the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, have had a profound impact on both education and employment.

The passage of historic legislation expanding educational rights to children with disabilities between the ages of 5-21 has also had an effect on the philosophies of education, parental involvement and placement decisions. Public Law 94-142, an amendment to the Education of the Handicapped Act passed in 1975 and renamed as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in 1990, as well as subsequent legislation requiring services for preschool children with disabilities, have had a major impact on the special schools and public education as well.

South Dakota's response to educating children with vision or hearing loss has been similar to trends in other states, but is in some ways unique because of the rural nature of the state, the small size of many school districts and the scarcity of trained teachers and other professionals to work with the deaf and blind.

Across the country, residential schools for the deaf and blind have responded to the research on early intervention with home-based programs for preschoolers. They have developed outreach services on either a consultant or itinerant model to expand services to local schools. They have specialized in educational diagnostics to supplement local evaluation teams. They have provided disability-specific training for both parents and teachers who lack information about vision or hearing loss.

The South Dakota School for the Deaf and the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped have developed along similar lines. Both schools have evolved to serve as resource centers for the state, providing those functions which cannot be readily provided by or within local school districts. Each school conducts evaluations, provides extensive consultation, shares educational materials, and disseminates public information as well as implementing teacher and parent training. Each employs teachers, evaluators and staff members trained and certified in the education of the deaf or blind. Each school also provides direct educational programming to students who cannot be appropriately served within their local districts. Both offer day programs

as well as residential services. Both utilize dual enrollment as determined appropriate for individual students. The role of the special schools has been to expand and supplement the programs and services provided in public schools. By working closely with the two special schools, local districts can fulfill their legal obligations to provide appropriate educational programming in the least restrictive environment. The majority of children with vision loss or hearing loss will be educated within their local school districts. Some may receive a part of their education at one of the two special schools. A few students will receive their entire schooling at one of the schools.

Under their current Role and Mission Statements, the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped and South Dakota School for the Deaf are a significant part of the continuum of services in the statewide delivery system for children in need of special education or special education and related services.

Mission and Planning Assumptions

1. The South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped and the South Dakota School for the Deaf will have a viable mission statement which recognizes the uniqueness of each residential school.

2. Each school currently provides educational programs and outreach services appropriate to its role and mission.

3. Additional programs or services may be proposed to meet the needs of students, but these shall be consistent with the role and mission of the schools.

4. Each school is a part of the statewide continuum of services required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

5. The highest priority will be given to assuring program quality at each school.

6. The planning document itself will be reviewed regularly and amended as needed.

Statewide Assumptions

1. The South Dakota School for the Deaf and the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped will continue to enjoy the strong support of the South Dakota Board of Regents and the Department of Education.

2. The continuum of services will remain a part of the state and federal requirement for educating students with disabilities.

3. Because the two schools are state supported and have statewide roles and missions, their services should be available to every resident child under the age of twenty-one who needs educational intervention because of vision or hearing loss.

4. The number of children identified as deaf or hard of hearing and those identified as visually impaired or blind will remain consistent, with dramatic increases or decreases unlikely.

5. Because the number of students with vision loss or hearing loss remains small, most local schools will not employ trained teachers specializing in the education of the deaf or blind.

6. Because of the rural nature of the state, many school districts are without local resources in the areas of vision loss or deafness.

7. Local school districts in South Dakota will continue to need support services, staff development, and materials from the two special schools.

8. Students who are legally blind must by state law be evaluated to determine whether braille should be introduced or continued.

9. According to statute, students who will be taught braille must have a properly certified instructor.

10. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing must be evaluated to determine what method(s) of communication is most effective.

11. Students who need interpreting services must have a certified interpreter.

12. Adult consumer groups will play an active advisory role to the special schools on matters concerning blindness and deafness.

13. Parents will be actively involved in programming planning and evaluation for the schools, as well as with their own child's Individual Educational Plan.

14. The two special schools serve as model programs, which provide access to specialized curriculum, teaching methods and adaptive materials and equipment designed to meet the needs of students who are deaf or blind.

15. The two schools will continue to benefit from the support of the communities in which they are located and the services and cooperative arrangements which have been established there.

16. Each child is legally entitled to a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. For some students, the most enabling environment is one of the special schools.

17. There will be increasing demands for comprehensive and quality programs for children with vision or hearing loss.

18. Academic students who experience vision loss or hearing loss may be entitled to adaptive services under 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and benefit from the services of the special schools.

Governance Assumptions

1. Governance of the two schools shall remain with the South Dakota Board of Regents as established by the South Dakota Constitution.

2. The two special schools will continue to develop cooperative working relationships with the Department of Education and the local school districts.

3. There will be increased demands for delivery of services in local school districts including support services, materials, personnel preparation, and in-service.

4. There will be an increased demand for outreach services to families including parent training and early intervention.

5. There will be continued cooperation between the SDSD and SDSVH, as well as with the institutions of higher education and related state agencies.

6. Sharing of information between agencies is essential for the coordination of services and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

Student Assumptions

1. Vision loss or hearing loss impacts learning. This is true of both formal instruction and incidental learning.

2. Students who have significant vision loss must have opportunities to learn the skills of blindness.

3. Students who have hearing loss must have opportunities to learn communication skills and deaf culture.

4. For students who cannot effectively read print, braille is the mode for literacy.

5. Student numbers will not change dramatically. Although some causes of vision loss and hearing loss can be prevented or corrected, conditions related to prematurity are increasing with the medical advances that allow those born at earlier gestational stages to survive.

6. Vision loss and hearing loss tend to be under-reported and children with vision loss or hearing loss may be reported in other categories on the federal count.

7. Many of the causes of blindness and deafness which occur prenatally also result in other disabilities. The same is true for cases of traumatic injury or contagious disease.

8. Until there are consistent standards for reporting vision loss nationally, it will be impossible to know exactly how many children are impacted during their educational years by vision loss.

9. The incidence of blindness nationally is estimated to be 1 per 1,000 for school age children. There is no reason to assume that South Dakota would deviate from the norm.

10. The estimated number of South Dakota children under twenty-one who are legally blind would be 135; the number of those who are visually impaired is approximately 300. In December 1993, only 64 students were reported as visually impaired by public schools in the special education child count.

11. The incidence of deafness nationally is 2 per 1,000 for school age children.

12. The estimated number of South Dakota children under twenty-one who are hard of hearing or deaf is 600. In December 1993, there were 100 hearing impaired children and 25 classified as deaf by local schools.

13. The need for successful intervention with students who experience vision loss is highlighted by the fact that among blind adults under age 65 the unemployment rate nationally is at 75 percent.

14. There will be an increase of students with behavioral problems and/or multiple disabilities, which will increase the need for staff development.

15. Significant numbers of students served by the SDSD and SDSVH are considered "at risk" for academic failure.

Program Assumptions

1. Existing accreditations will be maintained.

2. Program reviews at the campus level will continue.

3. There will be an increased emphasis on vocational preparation and transition services.

4. Deaf culture will be required across the curriculum at the SDSD.

5. The skills of blindness--including braille reading and writing, daily living skills, orientation and mobility, and social/recreational skills--will be taught to all students who need these skills.

6. Education in the use of technology and its applications in today's society will be a component across the curriculum at the two special schools. Students will have access to adaptive technology which is appropriate for their educational needs.

7. Many students with vision loss or hearing loss will receive some or all of their education in local schools.

8. Curriculum will be compatible with local schools and credits will be transferable. The two schools will continue to meet the state graduation requirements.

9. Respect for diversity will be supported in the curriculum.

10. There will be an increased demand for distance learning for both students and their teachers.

11. There will be an increased demand for professional library and curricular materials to be loaned to families and local school districts.

12. Extended school year programming and special skills training are essential to the provision of appropriate educational programs for students.

13. Affiliations with the Council of Schools for the Blind, North Central Association of Schools for the Visually Handicapped, Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), and National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired will continue.

14. Affiliations with the Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf (CEASD) and the Council of American Instructors of the Deaf will be maintained by SDSD.

Staffing Assumptions

1. The emphasis on hiring appropriately qualified faculty will continue.

2. There will continue to be a need for well-qualified residential staff members.

3. National recruitment will continue along with recruitment of faculty in-state.

4. In addition to meeting South Dakota state teachers' certification, faculty members are expected to be certified in vision, with emphasis on meeting AER professional standards.

5. Salaries for faculty and support staff must remain competitive.

6. The demand for faculty and staff development opportunities will increase. Continued staff development is essential to ensure the success, safety, and well-being of students.

7. There will be an increasing emphasis on sign language proficiency and deaf culture for both faculty and residential staff at SDSD.

8. Staff will have to be prepared to work with teachers, parents, and university personnel, as well as with children.

9. There will be increased demand for outreach staff.

10. Depending of the needs of students, enrollment increases may require additional faculty and staff on campus.

Finance Assumptions

1. Current funding for the special schools will continue to be appropriated by the Legislature.

2. Current funding for the special schools will continue without reduction in dollars to maintain comprehensive and quality programs.

3. The services offered to South Dakota students, parents, and local schools by SDSVH and SDSD staff will be at no charge as specified in state law. Services to out-of-state students may be provided at a tuition rate established by the South Dakota Board of Regents.

4. The SDSVH will continue to receive federal quota dollars to purchase books and educational supplies/equipment from the American Printing House for the Blind.

5. Shifts in the schools' budgets will be increasingly required to meet escalating non-instructional costs.

6. Substantial increases in M & R will be required in order to prevent deterioration of the infrastructure of the school facilities.

7. As the number of students with multiple disabilities or behavior problems increases, the personnel costs increase.

8. A funding source must be determined for summer services.

9. The development of foundations to support the work of the two schools will be of increased importance.

Facilities Assumptions

1. Capital asset needs will increase and their cost will increase due to rapidly changing technology and increasingly sophisticated equipment.

2. There will be an increasing demand for contractual services for technicians who have been trained to work with more sophisticated equipment.

3. Energy consumption will increase in order to provide appropriate environments for specialized equipment.

4. The cost of utilities will increase.

5. The need for maintenance and repair funds will increase.

6. Inflationary increases in maintenance and repair costs and capital asset purchases will require that these needs be met in a timely fashion.

7. The efforts of trained personnel have reduced expenditures in O & M.

Intergovernmental Relations Assumptions

1. The administration's interest in and support for quality instruction for deaf and hard of hearing students and those with vision loss will continue.

2. The interagency agreement between the Department of Education and the South Dakota School for the Deaf and the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped will continue.

3. There will be an increasing need to work with broad-based advocacy groups to articulate the need for continued quality education with proper funding levels for students with hearing or vision loss.

4. The SDSD will continue to receive support from Sioux Falls and deaf communities.

5. The SDSVH will continue to receive support from the Aberdeen community and blind consumer groups.

6. Cooperation with the State Library will be necessary to ensure access to adapted materials. The interagency cooperative agreement will continue.

7. Cooperation between the SDSVH and the Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired will be essential to the provision of appropriate transition services to all eligible students. The interagency cooperative agreement will continue.

8. Cooperation with the university teacher preparation programs will ensure that all teachers are aware of the resources available for children with vision or hearing loss.

DIRECTIONS

I. Ensure that all resident children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired have access to appropriate education programs and services.

II. Ensure the quality of educational programs and services for children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.

III. Maximize the delivery of services statewide through outreach programs designed to meet the identified needs of students, parents, and local school districts.

IV. Create a quality teaching and learning environment on each campus that promotes student growth through education and related experiences, both in the classroom and within the community.

V. Develop the special schools as centers of excellence, modeling successful practices and programs for students with hearing or vision loss.

VI. Execute responsible and accountable management of allocated resources.

VII. Foster collaborative relationships with the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, local school districts, state universities as well as other agencies, service providers and consumer groups.

VIII. Foster collaborative partnerships with parents/guardians in the education of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.

IX. Increase public understanding of vision and hearing loss and appreciation for quality educational programs for children.

X. Seek competitive compensation for all classifications of employees at the special schools.

XI. Provide and maintain appropriate facilities, equipment, and other resources for the special schools.

I. **Ensure that all resident children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired have access to appropriate education programs and services.**

- ❑ Work with parents and local school districts to increase understanding of the components of an appropriate education.
- ❑ Work with parents and local school districts to increase understanding of the educational options available for students with vision or hearing loss.
- ❑ Maintain the cooperative agreement between the Board of Regents and the Board of Education, which clarifies the relationship between the special schools and the Office of Special Education.
- ❑ Provide evaluations of students by individuals or teams who are trained and experienced in the evaluation of children with hearing or vision loss.
- ❑ Provide information to local school districts which may assist in identifying and initiating services to children with hearing or vision loss.
- ❑ Provide direct services to parents of preschool children with vision or hearing loss.
- ❑ Provide consultative service to local school districts for students who are best served in their local schools.
- ❑ Provide resource materials to parents and local schools.
- ❑ Facilitate transitions between the special schools and local school districts.

II. **Ensure the quality of educational programs and services for children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.**

- ❑ Maintain accreditation with the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs.
- ❑ Seek and/or maintain other appropriate accreditations through such entities as North Central Association, National Accreditation Council for Schools and Agencies Serving the Blind and Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf.
- ❑ Promote regular review of curriculum, teaching practices, and adaptive equipment.
- ❑ Provide the adaptive skills necessary for students who are blind or visually impaired.

- ❑ Provide the communication skills necessary for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for students to learn about themselves and their disability.
- ❑ Provide students with appropriate opportunities to interact with their age peers, deaf/visually impaired peers, and within the community at large.
- ❑ Provide access to adaptive technology which will enhance the educational program and prepare students for adulthood and future independence.
- ❑ Require and provide for continued professional development for faculty and staff.

III. Maximize the delivery of services statewide through outreach programs designed to meet the identified needs of students, parents and local school districts.

- ❑ Evaluate the service delivery options that will meet the educational needs of deaf and blind children in a rural state.
- ❑ Conduct periodic needs assessments and use the information gathered for planning to meet critical needs.
- ❑ Utilize the professional staff at the SDSD and SDSVH to provide local school districts access to expertise in assessment, practice, and materials.
- ❑ Provide ongoing staff development and training sessions for parents and local school district personnel.
- ❑ Explore the use of distance technology to increase access to professional staff.
- ❑ Secure support for summer programming to meet the needs of children for uninterrupted educational programs.
- ❑ Secure support for summer programming to meet the needs of students enrolled in public schools for special skills instruction and experiences with other children who are deaf or blind.

IV. Create a quality teaching and learning environment on each campus that promotes student growth through education and related experiences, both in the classroom and within the community.

- ❑ Provide a learning/living environment which is safe, nurturing, and consistent with academic, emotional, and developmental needs of children.
- ❑ Provide an environment that integrates academic and living experiences for students in meaningful ways.
- ❑ Adapt instruction and/or environment to meet individual learning needs of students.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for students to participate in a variety of social, cultural, and recreational activities within community settings.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of their own vision or hearing loss.
- ❑ Provide students who are deaf with opportunities to develop an understanding of deaf culture.
- ❑ Provide additional learning options through dual enrollment whenever appropriate for an individual student.
- ❑ Foster a transdisciplinary team approach to focus available resources on the child and ensure continuity and communication between the school program and residential or home setting.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for both students and staff to develop individual strengths.
- ❑ Create a community of learners.
- ❑ Create an environment in which every student is stimulated, inspired, motivated and meets with success every day.
- ❑ Create an environment in which students are actively involved in their own learning.
- ❑ Ensure students have ample opportunities to apply their learning to real-life situations.

V. **Develop the special schools as centers of teaching excellence, modeling successful practices and programs for students with vision and hearing loss.**

- ❑ Ensure all teachers in the special schools have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide instruction to students with special needs.
- ❑ Recruit, hire, and retain faculty and staff with the highest level of training and experience in the fields of deafness and blindness.
- ❑ Ensure all faculty and staff see a clear and positive relationship between what they do and the success of students.
- ❑ Support each teacher as a member of a collegial team.
- ❑ Establish continual professional development of faculty and staff as the norm.
- ❑ Set high standards for excellence for both students and staff.
- ❑ Provide access to practical adaptive technology.
- ❑ Focus decision making on the best available data/research in education, special education, and the education of the deaf and blind.
- ❑ Provide instructional leadership which is continually focused on student learning and the improvement of instruction.
- ❑ Establish parents as full partners in the educational process.
- ❑ Create opportunities for students to associate with successful individuals who have vision or hearing loss.
- ❑ Demonstrate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Rehabilitation Act in employment practices and accessibility.
- ❑ Serve as a model of excellence for teacher education students, practicum students, and public school personnel.
- ❑ Provide leadership in addressing educational and employment issues that pertain to the deaf and blind.
- ❑ Increase the shared information, cooperative programs, and explore other opportunities for expanding exchange of "best practices" with peer schools in our region and throughout the country.

VI. Execute responsible and accountable management of allocated resources.

- ❑ Conduct all personnel functions in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies of the state of South Dakota, the South Dakota Board of Regents, and federal mandates such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ❑ Engage in proactive planning to ensure resources are used to meet high priority goals for the two special schools.
- ❑ Prepare and submit budget requests to the South Dakota Board of Regents that reflect the total needs of the two special schools.
- ❑ Conduct fiscal transactions in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies of the State of South Dakota and the South Dakota Board of Regents.
- ❑ Establish a communication network within each of the special schools to facilitate planning, implementation, and evaluation of all major school functions.
- ❑ Establish ongoing communication with the schools' constituents including parents, disability communities, agencies, and the general public.

VII. Foster collaborative relationships with the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, local school districts, and state universities, as well as other agencies, service providers, and consumer groups.

- ❑ Continue participation in the Board of Regents/Board of Education cooperative agreement.
- ❑ Continue interagency agreements with SBVI, State Library and other groups as appropriate.
- ❑ Provide training and support in team building skills for outreach personnel.
- ❑ Maintain viable and active Advisory Councils.
- ❑ Increase appropriate interactions between the special schools and schools of education at the public universities and private colleges.
- ❑ Work cooperatively with college and university programs in expanding understanding of the educational needs of children who are blind or deaf.

VIII. Foster collaborative partnerships with parents/guardians in the education of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.

- ❑ Increase faculty and staff contacts with parents.
- ❑ Establish parents as key players on the child's planning team.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for parent participation in educational and recreational activities with their children and with other families.

IX. Increase public understanding of vision and hearing loss and appreciation for quality educational programs for children.

- ❑ Strengthen public information efforts regarding vision and hearing loss.
- ❑ Take advantage of opportunities to work with educational and health related groups and provide information and resources.
- ❑ Increase the visibility of the special schools in South Dakota.
- ❑ Focus on the expertise available only through the two schools and the resource they provide to the state as a whole.
- ❑ Engage in the expansion of knowledge in the fields of deafness and blindness, especially as it pertains to the education and well-being of children.

X. Seek competitive compensation for all classifications of employees at the special schools.

- ❑ Pay competitive salaries based on the markets from which we recruit.
- ❑ Provide competitive benefit packages.
- ❑ Ensure that faculty and staff are provided with resources necessary to function efficiently and professionally.
- ❑ Develop a consistent salary policy and pay ranges for those employees not covered by the COHE contract.
- ❑ Provide personal and professional support for all employees.

XI. Provide and maintain appropriate facilities, equipment, and other resources for the special schools.

- ❑ Seek funding for maintenance and repair to maintain the infrastructure of the campuses.
- ❑ Integrate current technology into the facilities with provisions for future expansion.
- ❑ Maintain the campus facilities to support a positive school climate.
- ❑ Create comfortable and functional educational and living environments for children.

BENCHMARKS

As in the case of higher education, defining the direction for the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped and the South Dakota School for the Deaf provides a foundation for continuous improvement. The expectation that progress will be made on these directions provides a solid basis for institutional planning to achieve desired outcomes for students. Whether or not specific directions can be achieved will be dependent upon multiple factors, only some of which are within the control of the two schools and the South Dakota Board of Regents. Nevertheless, it is necessary to construct a system for measuring advancement toward the established goals. It is also beneficial for state policymakers and the citizenry to have an appreciation of the directional course of the two special schools.

Benchmarks of achievement will permit the Board of Regents to show overall progress in attaining the directions outlined for the two special schools. Not all directions will be measured, but the indicators will provide an overview of achievement. By establishing baseline information and directional targets, the benchmarks will offer interested observers with a basis for reviewing progress at integral points. This accountability vehicle will assist parents, local schools, consumer groups, and policymakers in understanding the role of the special schools in the special education service delivery system.

DIRECTION I: Ensure that all resident children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired have access to appropriate education programs and services.

- **Benchmark 1.** The proportion of identified children receiving services.
- **Benchmark 2.** The number of students impacted by each type of service provided by the special schools.
- **Benchmark 3.** The number of contacts with local school districts and agencies.
- **Benchmark 4.** Specified activities completed under the BOR/BOE Interagency Agreement.

DIRECTION II. Ensure the quality of educational programs and services for children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.

- **Benchmark 5.** Meeting or exceeding standards from appropriate state, regional, and national accreditation organizations.

❑**Benchmark 6.** Student access to adaptive technology and resource materials.

❑**Benchmark 7.** Successful placement in post-secondary education or employment.

DIRECTION III. Maximize the delivery of services statewide through outreach programs designed to meet the identified needs of students, parents, and local school districts.

❑**Benchmark 8.** Numbers of students served on an outreach basis.

❑**Benchmark 9.** Number of staff development and training sessions provided to parents and school personnel.

❑**Benchmark 10.** Resources allocated to summer programming.

DIRECTION IV: Create a quality teaching and learning environment on each campus that promotes student growth through education and related experiences, both in the classroom and within the community.

❑**Benchmark 11.** Staff development activities in identified areas of need.

❑**Benchmark 12.** Student participation in on- and off-campus activities.

❑**Benchmark 13.** Meet or exceed all health and life safety requirements.

DIRECTION V: Develop the special schools as centers of excellence modeling successful practices and programs for students with hearing or vision loss.

❑**Benchmark 14.** Number of staff with certification in the education of the vision or hearing impaired as teachers, braillists, or interpreters.

❑**Benchmark 15.** Utilization of the two schools as sites for teacher preparation.

DIRECTION VI: Execute responsible and accountable management of allocated resources.

❑**Benchmark 16.** Ratio of institutional, academic, and student support in comparison to peer institutions.

DIRECTION VII: Foster collaborative relationships with the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, local school districts, and state universities, as well as other agencies, service providers, and consumer groups.

❑**Benchmark 17.** Number of collaborative agreements and activities.

DIRECTION VIII: Foster collaborative partnerships with parents/guardians in the education of children who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or visually impaired.

❑**Benchmark 18:** Proportion of parents/guardians taking part in the educational decisions through the IEP (Individual Educational Plan) process.

DIRECTION IX: Increase public understanding of vision and hearing loss and appreciation for quality educational programs for children.

❑**Benchmark 19:** Prepare annual dissemination of information in accordance with a public information plan.

DIRECTION X: Seek competitive compensation for all classifications of employees at the special schools.

❑**Benchmark 20:** Ratio of salaries to comparative markets for all employees.

DIRECTION XI: Provide and maintain appropriate facilities, equipment, and other resources for the special schools.

❑**Benchmark 21:** Ratio of facility M & R support to replacement value of facilities.

❑**Benchmark 22:** Ratio of capital assets replacement funding to value of capital assets inventory.

SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED MISSION STATEMENT

The role and mission of the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped is to provide statewide services to meet the educational needs of children with sensory impairments from birth through twenty-one in South Dakota by serving in a dual leadership and resource role in the statewide effort to serve these students. This mission will be carried out through cooperative efforts with all appropriate state agencies, educational cooperatives, local education agencies, and colleges and universities. It is recognized that the mission of the South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped is a significant part of the continuum of services in the statewide delivery system for children in need of special education or special education and related services.

The South Dakota School for the Visually Handicapped understands this responsibility to include:

❑Direct educational programs and services to students who are blind and visually impaired including the multihandicapped and deaf-blind, in Aberdeen and at other designated locations, with appropriate emphasis on the "disability specific skills" of braille, orientation and mobility, technology, daily living, leisure, community interaction, and work experience;

❑Residential services for those students whose needs are better served in such an environment;

❑Educational evaluations and interpretation of results for parents and public school teachers and recommendations for appropriate educational programming and placement;

❑Consultative services for local school districts, cooperatives, and parents to assist them in developing child identification procedures and an appropriate education program;

❑Supplementary services, including summer programming to reinforce educational growth, provide for special skills training, and assist students in understanding their vision loss and their own abilities;

❑Development of the school in Aberdeen as a resource center for information about vision loss, educational materials, methods, and equipment to serve educators, parents and the public;

❑Parental and family involvement in all aspects of the child's educational program with a full explanation of parental rights and responsibilities, as well as an understanding of vision loss;

❑Cooperative efforts with the Division of Education in the identification of students who are visually impaired and the delivery of appropriate educational programs and services as a part of the continuum of services;

❑Cooperative efforts with the colleges and universities in personnel preparation and staff development in the field of vision loss through internships, seminars, research projects, and other professional development activities;

❑Cooperative efforts with the Office of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired in the development and implementation of transition plans and vocational readiness;

❑Cooperative efforts with the South Dakota State Library in the provision of curriculum and support materials for students, teachers, and parents; and

❑Cooperative efforts with blind consumers through the S.D. Association for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota to increase public knowledge and acceptance of blindness and to support quality programs and services.

SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF MISSION STATEMENT

The role and mission of the South Dakota School for the Deaf is to provide statewide services to the sensory impaired children and youth of the state of South Dakota and to serve in a dual leadership and resource role in the statewide efforts to meet the educational needs of sensory impaired children from birth through twenty-one. This mission will be carried out through cooperative efforts with all appropriate state agencies, educational cooperatives, local education agencies, and colleges and universities. It is recognized that the mission of the South Dakota School for the Deaf is a significant part of the continuum of services in the statewide delivery system for children in need of special education or special education and related services.

The South Dakota School for the Deaf understands this responsibility to include:

❑Direct educational programs and services to deaf and hearing impaired students, parents, and professional service providers, including satellite programs in appropriate locations.

❑Residential services for those students whose needs are better served in such an environment.

❑Educational evaluations and interpretation of results for parents, public school personnel, and public service providers with recommendations for appropriate educational programming and placement.

❑Consultative services for local school districts, cooperatives, parents, and professional service providers, including curriculum and materials for statewide use, Captioned Film depository, professional library and updated curriculum outline.

❑Public information and referrals for Deaf Awareness programs and Speakers Bureau.

❑Educational support services through outreach program for refinement of existing programs specific to the immediate and particular needs of deaf and hearing impaired students, as well as those with secondary disabilities.

❑Community education in collaboration with GED and Adult Basic Programs and the Communication Services for the Deaf in Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

❑Specialized programs with accent on leadership development, transitional process, and utilization of talent for special arts, including summer programs for reinforcement of educational growth and development as a compensation for the loss of sound experience.

❑Parent and family education workshops, seminars, and information-sharing through a monthly newsletter.

❑Comprehensive sign language and interpreting training and certification programs in cooperation with the Communication Services for the Deaf and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

❑Staff and professional development programs based on demonstrated successes of programs for the deaf in the nation, in cooperation with the national consortium of Educational Resource Centers on Deafness.

❑Research and development facility for student interns and special education personnel, working alongside college and university personnel in the area of special education and updating the special education degree programs as necessary in response to the immediate and particular needs of the deaf and hearing impaired students.

❑Cooperative efforts with Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls to facilitate the transitional needs of the deaf and hearing impaired students.

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